

# DECLARATION

OF

Vice-Admiral John Lavvson;

Commander in Chief of the Fleet in the narrow Seas, by Authority

OF

PARLIAMENT:

With the Commanders of the several ships now with him in the *Downes*,  
in order to the Removal of the Interruption that is put upon the  
*Parliament*, the 13th. of *October* last.

**VV** Hereas on the ninth instant there was a Letter, from the Lord *Fleetwood*, came on board the Ship *James*, directed to the Vice-Admirall, in which he desired, that he, and those concerned, might give the Freedom of their thoughts touching a Government for the Common Wealth: In Answer to the which was Returned by the Vice-Admiral, and all the Commanders present, That being burthened in Spirit, at the fence of the unhappy breaches and distractions amongst the good people in the Nation; it was their humble apprehension, that the hopefuller wayes and means to make up the breaches and divisions, was a happy compoture betwixt the Parliament and Army, and that the Parliament might return to their Trusts, which when the Lord please to Grant, they could heartily joyn with any in Petitioning, that all words spoken, or things done by any person whatsoever, concerned in the difference betwixt the Parliament and Army, since the 13th of *October* 1659, might be for ever obliterated.

Now forasmuch as the same burthen lyes upon our Spirits still, in the Apprehension of the sad Consequences that are like to ensue; for that We do not hear of any Compoture, but that the Breach grows wider; thereby eminently threatening the loss and utter Ruine of the Cause and Interest of Christ and His People, which for so many years hath been so contended for, and cost much Blood and Treasure, both by Sea and Land. We apprehending still that there's no other Visible means under Heaven to heal the Breach, and to secure the Nation from the Common Enemy; Do Declare, That through the Lords commandment, we will in all Christian wayes and means, Endeavour the begetting a right Understanding betwixt the Parliament and Army, and a happy Compoture (if it may be) without Blood shed: But if there be yet an Endeavour by Force to hinder the Parliament, That was interrupted the 13th of *October* (1659) from coming to the Exercise and Discharge of their Trust; Who have to often been Declared the Supreme Authority of these Nations; That then We shall to the utmost of our Power, with our Lives, and all that is Dear to Us, use our whole Interest for the Removing of that Force, and restore Them to their Freedom and Priviledges.

And we do further Declare, (as in the presence of the Lord) that we have no Aym nor Ends to Advance particular Interests, but the Interest of Christ, and the Good and Weal of all the People of God; in their Rights, Civil, and Religious; and of our poor suffering Nations in General. And do utterly disclaim the Interest of *Charles Stuart*, and all His Adherents, or the Interest of any Single Person whatsoever, or House of Lords; Therefore We doubt not but to find the Concurrence and Assistance of all the and Upright-hearted in the Land. For whose sakes, next to the Cause of Christ, (God being our Witness) We have Engaged.

And We therefore Invite all our Brethren of the Churches, Army, Navy, and Militia of the City of *London* and *Country*, and all that profess Love to God, and His People, to joyn with Us, and give Us their Christian Aye and Assistance in the performance of the Premises, whereunto We are perswaded the Lord hath Called Us; least when too late, They and Us have Cause to lament the non-Improvement of the Opportunity that God hath put into our Hands, once more to Assert the Priviledges of Parliament, and Liberty of the good People of this Nation.

And that it may appear to all People, That We have no Rancor or Malice against the Persons of any, or thirst after Blood: We do Resolve, when the Lord shall please to Restore the Parliament to the Exercise of their Trust; Humbly to Petition Them, according to the Heads following, *Viz.*

1. That Indempity and Oblivion may be Granted to every Person and Persons, that have acted in the late unhappy differences, betwixt the Parliament and Army, since the 13th of *October*, 1659. that shall not further persist in Obstructing their return to their Trust.
2. That the Interest of Christ may be advanced in Justice and Uprightnesse; that the Government of the Nations may be settled upon these Foundations, and that all Laws not agreeable to the Word of God, may be repealed, and all Laws that shall be enacted, may be Consonant to the Word of God.
3. That all people of God, may be preserved in their Liberry to Worship God, as the Lord Jesus shall lead them out, so that they make not use of this to the prejudice of others. And that Superstition, and Idolatry, and profanenesse, be not Contenanced.
4. That care be taken for the maintenance and Incouragement of pious and learned Godly Ministers within the Nation, otherwise then by the way of Tythes.
5. That all possible encouragement may be given to Navigations, and the much decayed Trade of the Nation; and to that end, as soon as possible, those great Impositions (as Excise, and other new Imposts,) may be taken off, and some other way found for defraying the Charge of the Nation.
6. That no man be impressed, or forced, to serve in any Military Employment either by Land or Sea, otherwise than in the defence of his Country; and that the Sea-men might be paid every 10 or 12 Months, at the farthest, to Them or their certain Attorney.
7. That a comfortable Provision may be made for any man that serves at Sea, that shall be maimed or dismembred, and to the Widow and Orphans of such as shall be slain, which may be out of the Chest, and Prize-mony, which is the price of their Blood.
8. That some way and means may be found out for the Employment of the poor of the Nation, that are able; and such as are impotent and lame may have a Maintenance for their Subsistence.

Signed on board the *James* in the *Downes*, the 13th of *December*, 1659.